

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the remarks.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1, 3-10, 12-19, 21-27, 37-42, 49-57, 64-75 are pending. Claims 2, 11, 20, 28-36, 43-48, 58-63 and 76-84 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 10, 12-14, 16, 37-40, 49-54, 64, and 66-71 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,469,216) in view of Vincent et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,436,659) and further in view of Dischert (U.S. Patent No. 4,499,494) and further in view of Miyake (U.S. Patent No. 6,222,985) and further in view of Ide (U.S. PG PUB 2004/0208491). Claims 6, 8, 9, 15, 17-27, 41-42, 55-57 and 72, 74 and 75 were rejected in view of the art identified above and further in view of Kondo (U.S. Patent No. 5,748,235).

III. RESPONSE TO REJECTION

Applicants submit that the Office Action has failed to make a prima facie case of obviousness since Ide is not prior art to the present application. Indeed, Ide was filed on June 4, 2004 and claims the benefit of U.S. Serial No. 09/441,233 filed on November 16, 1999. The present application claims the benefit of Japan 11-041114, filed on February 19, 1999; Japan 11-

082228 filed March 25, 1999; and Japan 11-151859 filed on May 31, 1999. Applicants note that Certified English translations were received by the USPTO as indicated in the Office Action of July 28, 2006. Applicants submit that the three Japanese priority applications have a filing date prior to November 16, 1999. Therefore, Ide is not prior art to the present application.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable.

CONCLUSION

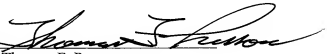
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Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance and request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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